

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-3 are pending

**Claim Rejections**

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by *Saroj's Cookbook* (<http://web.archive.org/web/19980509082152/http://bawarchi.com/cookbook/chinese4.html>, hereinafter referred to as "*Saroj*"). Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Saroj*. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claim 1 describes a method for preparing cooked rice, comprising: (a) steaming the rice after the rice is subjected to washing and soaking to effect gelatinization of starch inside the rice grain; (b) cooling and individuating the rice to remove moisture on the surface of the rice; (c) frying the rice with an oil to form an oil film over the surface of the rice grain; and (d) boiling the resulting rice with seasonings and water.

Applicants respectfully submit that *Saroj* does not teach or suggest the subject matter presented above as specifically recited in claim 1. First, *Saroj* does not disclose the initial step of steaming the rice; rather *Saroj* begins with a boiling step. Steaming rice means rice is placed in contact with steam or water vapor. Whereas boiling rice means the rice is placed in water and then the water is boiled. When steaming the rice, the rice grains do not swell. Gelatinization of starch occurs with substantially no absorption of external moisture by the rice grains. (Specification, pages 2-3). On the other hand, the initial boiling step of *Saroj* causes the rice grains to swell and absorb external moisture.

Second, *Saroj* does not disclose individuating the rice. Claim 1 of the present invention requires "cooling and individuating the resulting rice to remove moisture present on the surface

of each rice grain.” “Cooling and individuating” is defined in the Specification as blowing ambient air from a blower below a mesh-like conveyor belt carrying the rice. While being blown, the rice is spread evenly over the conveyor belt by unbinding clumps with a swizzle stick having comb-like fingers. (Specification, pages 3-4). The cooling and individuating step removes moisture to allow for more uniform coating of oil in the frying step. *Saroj* only mentions draining and cooling.

Third, *Saroj* does not disclose frying the rice. Claim 1 of the present invention requires “frying the resulting rice with an oil to form an oil film over the surface of each rice grain.” *Saroj* only discloses frying the vegetables. In *Saroj*, after the vegetables are fried they are poured over the rice.

Fourth, *Saroj* does not disclose “boiling the resulting rice together with seasonings and water” as recited in Claim 1. *Saroj* discloses adding spring onions, salt, and sauces (seasonings) to the vegetables after the vegetables have been fried. After the seasonings are mixed with the fried vegetables, they are poured over the rice. *Saroj* discloses heating the rice, including the seasonings and fried vegetables, just before serving. However, *Saroj* does not disclose adding water to the rice and boiling it.

Therefore, *Saroj* fails to teach or suggest all the features as specifically recited in claim 1.

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Saroj*. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 2 recites “wherein boiled rice grains have an outer layer to the depth of 0.5 mm from the surface of the grain and an inner layer deeper than 0.5 mm from the surface; the outer layer and the inner layer have a moisture content difference of 2.5 % to 5 % between them.”

Claim 3 recites “wherein the cooked rice shows a diffusion area of 2,500 mm<sup>2</sup> to 3,000 mm<sup>2</sup>, when 10 g of the cooked rice is charged into a cylindrical container having a diameter of 25 mm and is subjected to free fall therefrom at a height of 30 cm.”

Applicants point out that *Saroj* is not in the same field of invention as the present invention. *Saroj* discloses a method of preparing 3 servings of rice, whereas the claimed invention is for the industrial preparation of rice, *e.g.*, 1.5 kg as discussed in the Example on page 7 of the Specification.

In addition, the Specification provides clear and convincing evidence of unexpected results as compared to preparing rice by conventional methods. Nine samples of rice prepared by different methods, including the claimed method, were analyzed. (*See* Specification, pages 7-11). The samples were tested for moisture content in the outer layer and inner core of the rice. The diffusion area was analyzed by charging the samples into a 25 mm-diameter cylindrical vessel and then subjecting to a free fall at a height of 30 cm. The diffusion area of the fallen rice grains were calculated using a multipurpose image processing software program. The samples were also subjected to a sensory test. The sensory test was an evaluation by a 10-member tasting panel.

The results of the analysis are described in the Specification pages 9-11 and a summary of the results is shown in Tables 1 and 2. The analysis shows that the present invention provides superior results for difference in moisture content, diffusion area, and the sensory test over the conventional method for preparing rice. Therefore, claims 2 and 3 are not obvious over *Saroj*.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 102 anticipation rejection of claim 1 and the § 103 obviousness rejection of claims 2 and 3 is hereby solicited.

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Attorney Docket No. 031036

Response under 37 C.F.R. §1.111

In view of the aforementioned remarks, Applicants submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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